



By CLARENCE H. KNAPP

WITH A FEW KIND WORDS BY
FRANK SULLIVAN
AND
COREY FORD

ADORNED
WITH CUTS BY
DONALD
STREETER

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SOB BALLADS

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The New Yorker

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by
Clarence H. Knapp

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Made in the United States of America

817
K72

For
My Daughter June

D'30

**The Illustrations for
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PREFACE BY FRANK SULLIVAN

I HAVE asked the publishers of this book to ask me to say something about the author, Mr. Clarence Knapp. I have long been an admirer of Mr. Knapp's talent for writing the sob ballads which, appearing in *This* magazine or *That*, have aroused wide comment, one of the comments being that which was made to Mr. Knapp by G. P. Putnam's Sons when they said to him: "Suppose we publish the sob ballads in a book." Mr. Knapp, never at a loss for a ready answer, retorted, "Yes." Hence this book.

Knapp and I have been friends for years and have many interests in common, although we are of diametrically opposite types of beauty, he being of the brunette Slavonic type which fades early, while I am in that class, somewhere between cerise and terra cotta, all too rarely met with in these days of bad gin and air laden with exhaust fumes.

Our only really serious difference came in '61. Sumter had been fired on, and every red-blooded man felt called upon to defend his or her country, according to the light, as he saw it. Knapp and I were working in a toset factory in East Wipswich, Rhode Island. I was of Creole blood and felt that my heart belonged with Dixie, but Knapp kept repeating "This nation cannot exist half slave and half free." Perhaps things might have been otherwise if Knapp had not

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repeated that so often, but after he had stated it for the 234th time, I left, to accept a captaincy in Rosecrans' Eighteenth Zouaves—Rosecrans' *Famous Eighteenth Zouaves*. Knapp joined Grant's Quarter-master Corps.

Some time later I had gone to the Battle of Shiloh for the shooting. I was staying at the house of a friend. The morning after I arrived I winged a fine, plump brace of Union soldiers, and what was my amazement when one of them turned out to be my friend Knapp. I could not see my old colleague from the toset factory at East Epswich, Rhode Island, left suffering on the field of battle, so I slung him over my shoulder and carried him twelve miles, amid shot and shell, to the nearest base hospital. I then returned to look for the other soldier I had winged, thinking to have *him* for supper that night. To my utter amazement I found Knapp. Explanations followed and I discovered I had carried off the wrong soldier. Knapp was very sulky about it, declaring that he was a corporal and the other fellow a private and that he, the corporal, should have taken precedence over the private. Well, it was no time for bickering. There was enough bickering, what with the machinations of Grant's enemies and the detractors of the Great Emancipator. I am glad to state that the sectional differences and the various bitternesses which arose as a result of the Civil War are now practically forgotten.

Later on, I fell in love with Knapp's sister. Knapp fell in love with my sister. Then I fell in love with another of his sisters. Then he jumped me and fell in love with two of my sisters. Then I fell in love with his twin sisters. This went on until the sisters ran out, but the incident had its effect; it gave David

PREFACE

Wark Griffith and David Belasco the idea for all those plays and movies in which the handsome Confederate (Union) captain falls in love with the beautiful Northern (Southern) belle.

Mr. Knapp later attended Cornell, at about the time when it was fashionable to wear what was called "football" hair parted in the middle, while the chin was held firmly erect by a choker collar. At Cornell he belonged to the banjo club, but was later paroled.

After behaving for a time, he became a lawyer. Now, on a quiet day in Saratoga Springs, New York, Knapp can be heard from a distance of a mile or two practising law. He lives in that city with his wife, Edna, a lissome damsel, and their only child, June, a dynamic tot of seven summers.

As a youth he must have been a stunner for looks. And at present he is no slouch, having reached that interesting age when a man begins to gray a bit about the temples. He dresses meticulously and when Mayor of Saratoga Springs, which he was for two terms, he was known as the best-dressed Mayor in New York State.

I feel that one fact should be mentioned, in order that the reader may come to a complete understanding of our bard. He is a mushroom fancier, and can often be detected skulking about the purlieus of Saratoga, hunting down the *Helvella lacunosa*, *Morchella conica*, *Clitocybe candida*, or other non-poisonous varieties of that somewhat repulsive fungus. He is a Democrat and a furious trout. In or out of season, trout shudder at the very mention of the name of Knapp, and scud off to hide beneath the nearest pond lily. He has dabbled in *belles lettres* under both his own name and his pen name, which is "Ambrose Glutz." His own middle name is Hollis-

PREFACE

ter. One of his earlier sob ballads, "Ain't There At Least One Gentleman Here?" was read by Harry Leon Wilson with enthusiasm and later incorporated, with Mr. Knapp's pleased consent, in one of the Ma Pettingil (olav hasholem!) stories.

There you have as complete a vignette of the author of these ballads as lies within the present writer's poor powers to give. For a clearer idea of the physical characteristics of Knapp, I suggest that the portrait of him by Sir Joshua Reynolds, now in the Royal Gallery at London, be studied. I think a nice trip to London would do us *all* good.

FRANK SULLIVAN.

PREFACE BY COREY FORD

THE first thing to find out around here is whether Sullivan is writing the Preface to this book, or I am. If Sullivan is writing it, for example, then I want to know what the word "Preface" is doing at the head of this article. If, on the other hand, *I* am writing it, all I need to do is to turn back and copy Sullivan's Preface word for word, sign my name at the end, get my hat, and go out.

For the sake of argument, therefore, let us say that Sullivan is writing this Preface, and (just to give *me* some excuse for hanging around the front of Knapp's book) I am writing the Author's Note, entitled "How I Wrote the Sob Ballades by Clarence H. Knapp." In the meantime, Knapp himself can be writing the Ballades. This gives each of us something to do, and keeps the reader amused.

As a matter of fact, it is peculiarly appropriate that I should be writing the Author's Note to this collection of Sob Ballades by Clarence Knapp (obviously a clever rearrangement of the letters of my name, as Knapp himself would be the first to admit); for not only have I admired and quoted these admirable ditties for years, but in addition—as some of the oldest of my readers may perchance recall—I sang the very first Sob Ballade myself, here in New York, in 1857. I was a little tot of nine summers at the time, but I recall the historic occasion as vividly as though

PREFACE

it had actually happened. Despite my tender age, I had already attracted considerable local attention as a boy-soprano. Invitations had been pouring in for me to sing at Tony Pastor's, at the Hippodrome, and at La Scala in Milan; and one enthusiastic critic had even referred to me as "the Swedish nightingale." ("The Swedish nightingale I ever heard in my life," was what he said, literally.) My golden voice was fast becoming the toast of the town.

To be sure, New York in those times was scarcely the great mart of trade that we know today. In those days, Indians were frequently reported encamped in the foothills of Central Park, the Public Library was still under water, and the Chrysler Building was yet an idle dream. People lived up around Times Square in tiny shanties (later Nedick's Orange Booths), and transportation to and fro was accomplished by means of an old-fashioned stage-coach, or *barouche*. In my time a stage-coach ran down Fifth Avenue, turned east on Forty-Second Street, ran down Forty-Second Street to Broadway, turned south, ran down Broadway to Fourteenth Street, turned west, and ran down Ulysses Simpson Grant, who was attempting to cross the street. Grant was later rebuilt at Riverside Drive and 122nd Street, and the following year the horse-car was invented. This was followed two years later by the invention of the horse.

In the meantime, however, vague mutterings of unrest had arisen in this peaceful village; and with the coming of the horse-car and the spread of the city to the north, the first scudding clouds of revolt appeared to darken the serene summer sky. Realizing the ominous portents, a group of us had met in the back room of the old Astor House to discuss means of quenching these smouldering fires of insurrection. It

PREFACE

was a critical moment. Beneath the balcony a mob of enraged citizens were brandishing sticks and banners and filling the air with curses and angry threats; and occasionally a jagged rock would hurtle through the window and land at our feet, mute evidence of the general civic unrest. The demonstration in the street below was fast assuming the proportions of a riot. At length Robespierre spoke.

"If we but had some tender song to soothe their savage breasts," he said. "Some wistful roundelay, some gay snatch of balladery that would leap like a searing flame through that seething mob, and turn their thoughts to home and Normandy—"

As he finished speaking there was a stir on the outskirts of our group. All eyes turned as one to a slim, Byronic figure who had arisen and stood in silence. There was something about the dark, deep-set eyes and shock of auburn hair of the newcomer that riveted our attention. He reached beneath his black cape, and slowly drew forth a crumpled sheet of manuscript, written in a sprawling hand.

At the same moment another jagged rock hurtled through the window, and a discord of angry voices rose from the sidewalk below us. There was not a moment to lose. Seizing the unknown script, I stepped out alone onto the balcony above the crowd, and then, in the flute-like treble which had thrilled New York, I sang for the first time the words of that immortal Ballade "Ain't There At Least One Gentleman Here?"

Never shall I forget the electric effect as the Ballade ceased. For a moment the mob stared aghast, their eyes wet with tears. Then men threw away their muskets, women clutched their babies to their breasts, an old citizen in the front of the crowd seized

PREFACE

the tri-color and shouted in a cracked voice: "Liberty! equality! fraternity!" With one accord the vast crowd raised its voice, swelling with emotion, as I led them in the second verse of the famous Ballade. The Astor House Riot was over.

It was not till years later that I learned the modest author of this masterpiece was none other than Clarence H. Knapp.

In the meantime, of course, the popularity of his Sob Ballades had been increasing by leaps and bounds. His Ballades had been printed in F.P.A.'s Conning Tower, in the New Yorker, and elsewhere. A nation had taken them to its heart. His rhymes were on every tongue. Children lisped his songs at their mother's knee; repentant criminals hummed them with tear-dimmed eyes; in the grim fastnesses of the White House the solemn figure of the President was reported to read them in secret every night. Merchants and princes came to Saratoga every August to pay Knapp homage. He was offered the position of Poet Laureate in England, but turned it down in favor of Masfield, another poet. ("Give the new-comer a chance," Knapp had said.) Critics compared him with Shakespeare, Dickens, Homer. "Whereas Shakespeare completed his immortal plays during the Elizabethan era, Knapp is still writing," said one critic, comparing him to Shakespeare. Another critic compared him to Homer. "There is no comparison," he said.

It was but natural that such testimonials and encomiums of praise from the critical fraternity should foster in time a movement to preserve Knapp's matchless poesy for posterity. This volume is the answer. Here we may find, at last, such immortal gems as "I'm Proud to Admit I Am Blushing" or

PREFACE

that other old favorite "I Hope That I Haven't Offended." And as we read over these tender ditties, representing all the honest virtues of decency, sobriety, gentlemanliness, and kindness to others, we realize that this man Knapp, in his quiet and unassuming way, has perhaps done more to preserve the clean youth and wholesome ideals of our nation than Angelo Patri, Calvin Coolidge, or the New Humanists.

In fact, if every man, woman and child in this country should read this slim volume and absorb the message of love which it teaches, not only will this be a better nation to live in, but Knapp will be practically rolling in royalties, and perhaps will buy Sullivan and me that case of champagne he promised us for writing this Preface.

COREY FORD.

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SOB BALLADS



SOB BALLAD
NUMBER I



TURNED *Jo* YOUR BIBLE?

I

A PLAYWRIGHT, who *had* been successful
On Broadway in times gone before,
For some years had known nought but failures.

It seemed that his *bright* days were o'er.
In disgust he gave up his writing

Now convinced that his genius was dead,
And started in gambling and drinking
—The life was disgraceful he led.

One night at a friend's house at dinner

He sat next to a girl he'd known well,
Who toward him was so sympathetic

That his troubles to her he did tell.

He said, "I'm back where I started.

I've failed though God knows I've tried.

I'm tired of it all"—here he faltered

Then gently the sweet girl replied,

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"Why haven't you turned to your Bible?
With stories the Old Testament's filled,
That seem waiting for some one—around them
A really great drama to build.
If you're searching for new inspiration
You'll find it in them—though they're *old*.
You don't need to look, beyond the Good Book
Where there's wealth for a playwright—untold."

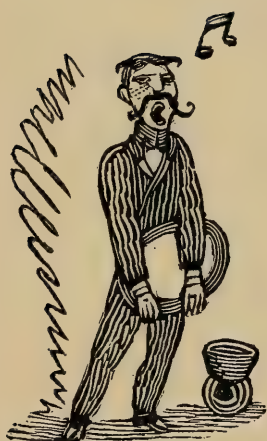
II

From his old haunts the playwright now vanished.
Weeks passed, then returning one day
He announced a great play he had written;
But producers just laughed him away
When they found it was biblical drama—
They told him it lacked in Romance.
A rich broker at last gave him backing,
—They'd been buddies together in France.
Came the first night, the play proved sensational;
With the curtain a mad tumult did rage.
There were shouts for the author—then silence
As he appeared with a girl on the stage.
Quoth he, "Friends, for the play do not thank me;
But to my dear little wife—here—instead
Give the credit, for 'twas she who suggested
The idea, months ago, when she said,

REFRAIN

"'Why haven't you turned to your Bible?
With stories the Old Testament's filled,
That seem waiting for some one—around them
A really great drama to build.
If you're searching for new inspiration
You'll find it in them—though they're *old*.
You don't need to look, beyond the Good Book
Where there's wealth for a playwright—untold.'"





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER II

I'M SORRY IF I HAVE OFFENDED



I

TWO girls stood at a counter
In a smart men's store one day,
And as they shopped, they twitted
The clerk in such a way,
That he at length grew weary
Of their silly gibes and stares
And answered them quite shortly,
At which one said "What airs!"
Said the other, "He's insulting,
To report him, I've a mind."
The youth replied—now worried—
"Ah, don't be so unkind."
They flushed at this entreaty
And realized with shame.
That they had wronged the young man
When himself he thus did blame—

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"I'm sorry if I have offended
I fear I lost patience just now.
The life of a clerk at a counter
Is trying, sometimes, you'll allow.
I've known better days—that's the reason
My pride I can't rule as I would.
So forgive me I pray for what I did say
—I spoke as no gentleman should."

II

They forgave but both protested
That the fault was theirs, alone.
Then urged that he would tell them
Of the "better days" he'd known.
He responded, "I am Russian
And of noble birth and name.
When the war my family ruined,
To this land, with them I came."
Quoth one girl, "How intriguing!
You must call—for more I'd hear."
He called. Anon came Romance.
They were engaged within the year.
"Your noble name I'm proud of"
Breathed the maid the day they wed—
"But *that* never would have won me—
If to me you had not said,

REFRAIN

"I'm sorry if I have offended
I fear I lost patience just now.
The life of a clerk at a counter
Is trying, sometimes, you'll allow.
I've known better days—that's the reason
My pride I can't rule as I would.
So forgive me I pray for what I did say
—I spoke as no gentleman should.'"





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER III

NO LIQUOR YOU'LL FIND IN OUR AUTO



I

A MERRY family party
Set forth one summers day
In an auto, on a picnic.
Their hearts were light and gay.
It was near the northern border
And when came a punctured tire,
Laughed a girl, "If Federal Agents
Should appear, I would expire."
The words she'd hardly uttered
When from a copse near by
Leaped forth a squad of agents.
"Hands up" their Chief did cry,
"While we search your car for liquor."
They obeyed. Then one, a youth,
Stepped forward and said bravely
"Please listen to the truth."

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"No liquor you'll find in our auto—
I hope, Sir, my word you will take—
There are sandwiches, please help yourself, Sir.
—In that box is a big chocolate cake.
That bottle holds nothing unlawful
—For it's just Cherry Bounce, mother made,
And *that* you'll agree, would surely be free
Of spirits as would lemonade."

II

But the Chief remained suspicious,
So knocked the young man down.
Then arrested all the family.
They were jailed in the next town.
When the Cherry Bounce was tested
It showed sufficient alcohol
Therein, to hold the party
On indictment—one and all.
They were tried before a jury—
Found guilty of the crime.
And though their lawyer asked for mercy
They were given three months "time."
Said the Judge, "I would be lenient,
But I cannot quite pass by
The attempt to hinder justice,
When your client spoke that lie.

REFRAIN

"No liquor you'll find in our auto—
I hope, Sir, my word you will take—
There are sandwiches, please help yourself, Sir,
—In that box is a big chocolate cake.
That bottle holds nothing unlawful
—For it's Cherry Bounce, mother made,
And *that* you'll agree, would surely be free
Of spirits as would lemonade.'"





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER IV



I

A TRAVELLING man once entered
Into a cabaret.

'Twas midnight and quite naturally
The throng there all was gay.

He sat down to a table
And ordered a Port wine.

Right near him was a party,
Most of whom felt fine.

Now one of this fast comp'ny
Was a youth too full of beer,

Who rose unsteady from his seat
And said so all could hear:

"That dancing girl looks good to me,
A kiss I'm going to steal."

The girl cried out as he drew near,
Then made this sweet appeal:

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"Ain't there at least one gen'leman here,
One who ain't full of whiskey or beer,
One who remembers his wife or his mother,
One who will act just like a big brother?
Don't think 'cause I dance midst these lights and
these lures,
That my feelings ain't hurt as easy as yours.
And though dancing girls are sporty 'tis claimed,
I've never done nothing of what I'm ashamed."

II

The travelling man rose from his seat,
And picking up a chair,
He threat'ningly strode toward the youth
So near that dancer fair.
Said he, "Miss, I heard your plea
And I'll protect your name."
The drunken youth then did shrink back
In terror and in shame.
The man glanced at the girl once more,
The frown from his face fell.
He recognized to his surprise
His boyhood's sweetheart, Nell.
He cried, "At last I've found you, Nell.
We'll leave this place and wed."
She whispered, "Bert, I knew you'd come
When those words I had said:

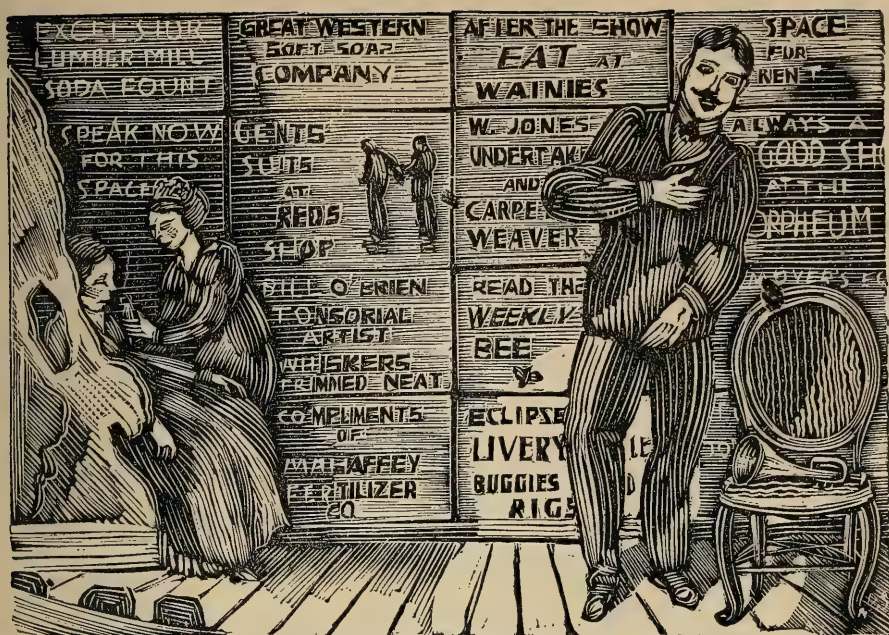
REFRAIN

" 'Ain't there at least one gen'leman here,
One who ain't full of whiskey or beer,
One who remembers his wife or his mother,
One who will act just like a big brother?
Don't think 'cause I dance midst these lights and
these lures,
That my feelings ain't hurt as easy as yours.
And though dancing girls are sporty 'tis claimed,
I've never done nothing of what I'm ashamed.' "





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER V



A STORY I'M GOING TO TELL YOU

I

BEFORE a brilliant audience,
 A mistress of her Art
 Was playing a cornet solo—
 'Twas music from the heart.
 Now of a sudden faltered
 Her notes so true and bold;
 She stopped, then strangely started
 A haunting air, so old.
 'Twas "Just a Song at Twilight."
 A man rose from his chair
 And hastened toward the platform
 Where stood the player fair.
 She swayed; he caught her—fainting—
 And bore her to her maid;
 Then faced the anxious audience,
 And these words to them he said:

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"A story I'm going to tell you,
A story of Love and Romance.
This lady and I, in days far gone by,
Were sweethearts in wartime France.
We quarrelled, we parted, I lost her;
I searched all in vain till today,
Now I've found her again, we'll part only when
Death finally takes us away."

II

"When in battle I was wounded,"
He went on and did explain,
"In the hospital, her music
Did much to ease my pain,
And when 'Just a Song at Twilight'
She'd play so soft and low,
'Twas then I learned to love her—
That's all—the rest you know."
Now back upon the platform
The artist came, so pale,
But smiling said, "I'll finish,
My public I'll not fail;
My emotions overcame me
When I saw my lost love, true,
But joy brought quick recovery
When I heard him say to you:

REFRAIN

"A story I'm going to tell you,
A story of Love and Romance.
This lady and I, in days far gone by,
Were sweethearts in wartime in France.
We quarrelled, we parted, I lost her;
I searched all in vain till today,
Now I've found her again, we'll part only when
Death finally takes us away.'"





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER VI

WE MIGHT LET YOU BE OUR PLAYMATE



I

IN a softly lighted boudoir
Sat a woman shedding tears,
As she thought how she'd neglected
Her two little girls for years.
For Society had made her
At its beck and call—a slave.
To her no time for children,
This exacting mistress gave.
Now thoroughly repentant
To their sleeping room she came,
Where she found them gaily playing
With their nurse—a bedtime game.
With a smile she asked permission
To join them in their play;
To which one child—the oldest—
Replied soberly this way:

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"We might let you be our playmate
But I don't think 'twould be so much fun.
Our make-believe games you might laugh at,
Besides, what have we ever done
So naughty that we never see you
As most kiddies, their mothers do?
Nurse tries to explain but she can't make it plain.
We *might* like you more if we knew."

II

The words the child had spoken,
While they—pain—the mother brought
Were just what she had needed
With the lesson stern they taught.
From that night her friends ne'er saw her
In their fast, exclusive set.
Some asked, with lifted eyebrows,
"What's become of Kath, our pet?"
Insincere—not really caring,
Merely something smart to say;
Little dreaming she was happy
With her children far away,
Where she'd won back their affection
For which her heart had bled.
On that night her eyes were opened
When her daughter to her said,

REFRAIN

"We might let you be our playmate
But I don't think 'twould be so much fun.
Our make-believe games you might laugh at,
Besides, what have we ever done
So naughty that we never see you
As most kiddies, their mothers do?
Nurse tries to explain but she can't make it plain.
We *might* like you more if we knew."





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER VII



I

IN a moving picture palace
 Sat a maid and youth one night,
 Who were keeping steady company
 And to both the world seemed bright;
 But with the picture finished
 The girl was heard to sigh,
 And when her escort asked her
 The reason, she did reply,
 "Oh, Clem, you're not romantic
 Like the hero on the screen,
 If, as he does, you could thrill me
 I'd be happy as a queen."
 The lad heard her in silence,
 Then gently pressed her hand
 And as goodnight he bade her,
 Said, "I think I understand.

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

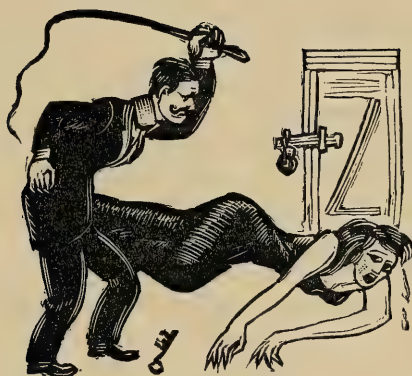
"I'm sorry I'm not like the hero,
I know I'm not much of a sheik,
But I try hard to make you happy
Though I *don't* make a thousand a week.
Perhaps I'd better release you,
For your freedom would then mean a chance
To find your ideal, like the one in the reel
Who could give you both wealth and romance."

II

Not long after they had parted,
At a charity bazaar
She met a movie actor,
Who claimed he was a star.
Attracted for the moment,
But with motives only bad,
He fooled her into thinking
That he cared for her—the cad.
But soon came the awakening,
And she learned his nature, base.
Then she meekly sought her first love
Who forgave her fall from grace.
She sobbed, "I don't deserve it.
Ah, how strange I couldn't be
Content that night with your love
When you gently said to me.

REFRAIN

"I'm sorry I'm not like the hero,
I know I'm not much of a sheik,
But I try hard to make you happy
Though I *don't* make a thousand a week.
Perhaps I'd better release you,
For your freedom would then mean a chance
To find your ideal, like the one in the reel
Who could give you both wealth and romance.' "





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER VIII

NO ONE BUT GRANDMA Will DO



I

THE hostess of a night club,
Amidst a merry throng
Was seated at a table,
Where all was mirth and song.
Behind a mask of laughter
She hid her feelings sad
And tried—though tears kept starting—
To help her guests make glad.
For her thoughts were of her grandchild
So many miles away,
And her own dear daughter's letter
Which had reached her just that day.
Now feigning sudden illness
She excused herself and fled
To her room and from the letter,
Once more these words she read:

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"The baby keeps calling for grandma
But so far has called her in vain.
The doctor says nothing but grandma
Can ease our wee kiddie of pain;
So won't you please answer her calling
—It may be a hardship for you—
But remember, dear mother, baby cries for no other,
AND NO ONE BUT GRANDMA WILL DO."

II

Swift in a highpowered motor
The hostess sped, that night.
She was at her grandchild's bedside
Just at the morn's first light.
And from that very moment
The babe began to mend.
"Heaven," said the mother,
"Will to grandma blessings send."
And so it seemed. That evening
—Strange are the ways of fate—
That night club it was raided.
"Twas well I did not wait,"
Said the hostess, then she added,
As the baby cooed in glee,
"I might now be in prison
Had I failed to heed that plea.

REFRAIN

"The baby keeps calling for grandma,
But so far has called her in vain.
The doctor says nothing but grandma
Can ease our wee kiddie of pain;
So won't you please answer her calling
—It may be a hardship for you—
But remember, dear mother, baby cries for no other,
AND NO ONE BUT GRANDMA WILL DO.'"





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER IX

I'M PROUD TO ADMIT THAT I'M BLUSHING



I

A CROWD of Ritzy youngsters
 Who had danced the night away,
 In Childs had stopped for breakfast.
 Their spirits still were gay.
 As they ate their talk was "sexy."
 There were risqué tales and verse,
 Which were greeted with loud laughter
 As they went from bad to worse.
 But one girl seemed uneasy
 And when her cheeks with shame grew red,
 A youth was quick to note it
 And tauntingly he said,
 "Well, see Baby Belle, *she's* blushing,
 I swear she's going to cry.
 Did we shock you?" Here she stopped him
 And thus bravely did reply:

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"I'm proud to admit that I'm blushing
—You may say if you like I'm a prude—
At your stories, your jokes and your verses
Which I think just disgusting and lewd.
With so much in life that's engaging,
It would seem to me—once in awhile—
Some relief you might find, in a subject refined
Unless you *prefer* to talk vile."

II

Her reply—so unexpected—
Brought silence to them all.
Though some showed slight resentment
And said, "Her bluff let's call."
But spoke one, a lad more thoughtful,
"Bella's right, we ne'er discuss
A thing that's half way decent;
And I doubt if *one* of us
Has brains enough to do it,
But by Gad! I'm going to try.
Come Belle, let's go. One convert
You've made and that is I."
And so firm was his conversion
That before a month had fled,
His bride to be she'd promised
For he loved her when she said:

REFRAIN

"I'm proud to admit that I'm blushing
—You may say if you like I'm a prude—
At your stories, your jokes and your verses
Which I think just disgusting and lewd.
With so much in life that's engaging,
It would seem to me—once in awhile—
Some relief you might find, in a subject refined
Unless you *prefer* to talk vile."





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER X

WHEN YOU SPOKE OF YOURSELF AS MY MOTHER



I

A DAPPER youth was dancing
 In a crowded night club, gay,
 With a woman—years his senior.
 His thoughts seemed far away.
 And when she whispered "Dearie
 What troubles you tonight?
 You're glum and awfully pouty,
 Doesn't 'mother' treat you right?
 I half suspect some flapper
 You wish were in my place."
 He replied, "Don't be so picky."
 As anger flushed his face.
 She laughed, "Oh let's stop dancing
 We won't quarrel, we'll smoke instead."
 But once seated at their table
 These words to her he said.

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"When you spoke of yourself as my mother
Just now—then the breaking-point came.
For a dancing man—even—holds sacred
Such a thing as his *own* mother's name.
And you might as well know I've a sweetheart
So I'm quitting this shame life tonight.
If I've meant aught to you, won't you please some-
thing do
Toward helping me start again right?"

II

The woman listened sadly,
She sensed the fool she'd been.
She mused, "May and December,
The same ending once again."
Her own son then she thought of,
Who filled a wastrel's grave.
And her heart began to soften.
She vowed, "This boy I'll save."
And now she spoke up brightly,
While choking back her tears.
"Go back to girl and mother
I'll pay for wasted years.
I'll start a school for dancing
And you shall be its head.
That I owe you for you brought me
To my senses when you said:

REFRAIN

"When you spoke of yourself as my mother
Just now—then the breaking-point came.
For a dancing man—even—holds sacred
Such a thing as his *own* mother's name.
And you might as well know I've a sweetheart
So I'm quitting this shame life tonight.
If I've meant aught to you, won't you please some-
thing do
Toward helping me start again right?"





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER XI

YOU'RE TO RIDE *for* THE HONOR OF DIXIE



I

THE race track was crowded with people
Who were there for the "Derby Cup" grand.
Society was well represented

By the creme de la creme of the land.
In the paddock were owners and trainers,
With each boasting that his horse was "in";
But apart stood an old Southern Horseman

Who just prayed his *filly* might win.
"Maid Blue Grass," her name—on her chances
At long odds he'd but now staked his all.

Yet he seemed quite cool and collected
While awaiting the bugles shrill call.
When the jockey approached for instructions

And asked him, "Boss, how does Ah ride
This race?" The old sportsman thus answered,
With his voice fairly choking with pride:

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"You're to ride for the honor of Dixie,
Her fame and fair name to uphold.
They come first, lad, for they are more precious
Than the purse or that prize cup of gold.
If the 'Maid' wins we save the old homestead,
The plantation and all we love there.
So ride, boy, the best you know how. For the rest
We must trust in the Lord and the mare."

II

"They're off"—soon the vast crowd was shouting
"See the filly she's lengths in the lead."
It was true and ne'er once was she headed—
All records she broke with her speed.
Amid cheers, the Gold Cup was awarded
To the sportsman as "Dixie" the band
Wildly played. Then he turned to his jockey
And was about to grasp his black hand,
When the boy dropped his head—he was sobbing—
And confessed "Boss you might as well know
That some gamblers bribed me with big money,
If Ah'd hold back the 'Maid' and would throw
'The Derby,' but the talk dat you give me
Made me once again hones' and true.
And I jus' rode for home and the Southland
When those words came—so noble—from you:

REFRAIN

"'You're to ride for the honor of Dixie,
Her fame and fair name to uphold.
They come first, lad, for they are more precious
Than the purse or that prize cup of gold.
If the "Maid" wins we save the old homestead,
The plantation and all we love there.
So ride, boy, the best you know how. For the rest
We must trust in the Lord and the mare.'"





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER XII



DON'T MAKE MY SON A FELON

I

A YOUNG lad was on trial
 For the stealing of a hack.
 He had been caught red-handed,
 And for him it did look black.
 But when his dear old mother
 Heard her son was back in jail
 She hastened to the court room
 —She looked so white and pale—
 And appealing to the justice
 Who seemed so gruff and stern,
 She made these touching statements
 About that boy of hern:

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

“Don’t make my son a felon, judge;
’Tis true he stole a hack.
But I know within a month or two
He would of brung it back.
It ain’t as if he had of stole
A handsome taxi-cab.
That would of been real stealing, but
My Gawd this—ain’t—so—bad.”

II

Now this judge was only human,
Though no one thought him such,
And those words of this old lady,
At his hard heart did clutch.
And thinking of his own son
Who filled a felon’s grave,
He quickly made his mind up
This youth’s good name to save.
Then turning to the culprit,
He said, “My lad you’re free,
I should of gave you sixty days,
But I’ll heed your mother’s plea:

REFRAIN

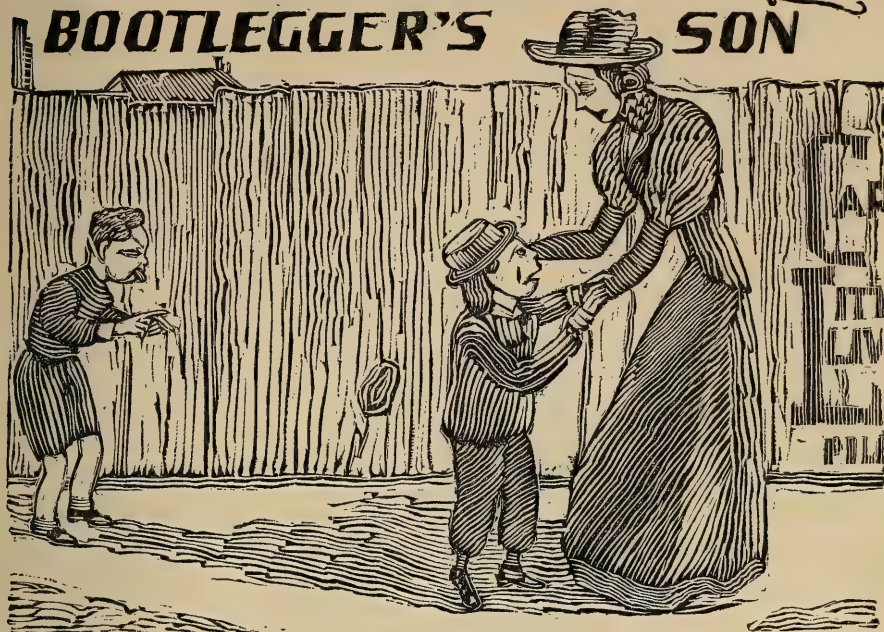
“Don’t make my son a felon, judge;
’Tis true he stole a hack.
But I know within a month or two
He would of brung it back.
It ain’t as if he had of stole
A handsome taxi-cab.
That would of been real stealing, but
My Gawd this—ain’t—so—bad.’”





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER XIII

TELL ME ABOUT MY DADDY, OR *The* BOOTLEGGER'S SON



I

IN a beautiful mansion on Long Island Sound,
At the close of a chill autumn's day,
Sat a matron refined and richly begowned,
Who was watching her young son at play.
The lad, at length tired of games and his toys,
Climbed up on his dear mother's knee.
And then with a sigh, in a brave little voice.
He made to his loved one this plea:

REFRAIN

"Please tell me about my daddy.
I'm old enough now to know.
My playmates all say, in a mean sort of way,
That he was a bootlegger low.

SOB BALLADS

They whisper that he is in prison—
You're crying—Oh, that proves it's true.
There, don't weep for shame, mamma, you're not to
blame.
Let your boy share your troubles with you."

II

Now the mother ceased sobbing and dried up her
tears,
Then straining her boy to her breast,
She related the story of turbulent years
And the guilt of his father confessed.
"No doubt he did wrong, but his words I hear still
'For the wife and the kiddie,' he'd say.
And that's why we're lonesome and will be until
He returns to his loved ones some day.

REFRAIN

"There—I've told you about your daddy
'Twas something you had to know.
Your playmates—you tell, that their parents so swell
Bought booze from that bootlegger low.
Yes—it's true that he is in prison;
And that's just where *they* ought to be.
So don't be ashamed when they should be blamed
As much as your daddy and me."





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER XIV



TONIGHT OF A VILLAGE I'M DREAMING.

I

A CROWD of merry revelers
 Were "slumming" round the town,
 When one cried, "Now Bohemia—
 To 'The Village,' let's go down."
 The rest agreed 'twas jolly—
 And soon all were in a place,
 That was called the "Smugglers Cavern
 Or the Village's Disgrace."
 Now all about was riot,
 And when a sweet girl near
 Rose from a group of artists,
 They hoped for something queer.
 She spoke—"Please—your attention.
 I wrote this little thing.
 And no one's ever heard it."
 She then did softly sing:

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"Tonight of a village I'm dreaming
That is far from the city's noise,
Where homelights in windows are gleaming
For wandering girls and boys.
They blaspheme who call *this* a village
Where nothing is quite what it seems.
Oh I wish I were back, with my old sweetheart, Jack
In *my* village—the one of my dreams."

II

Her artist friends here stopped her.
—A surprise to them it came—
Said one, in tones sarcastic
"So you're weary of the game."
Then a youth, one of the slummers
—He was handsome, tall and young—
Strode over to the table
Where sat the girl who'd sung.
With head bowed, she was weeping.
He gently touched her back.
She glanced up and then sobbed out
"Oh, Jack—My darling Jack."
"Yes, Beth. At last you've found it
As I told you, false and wrong.
We'll go back now together
Thank God you sang that song:

REFRAIN

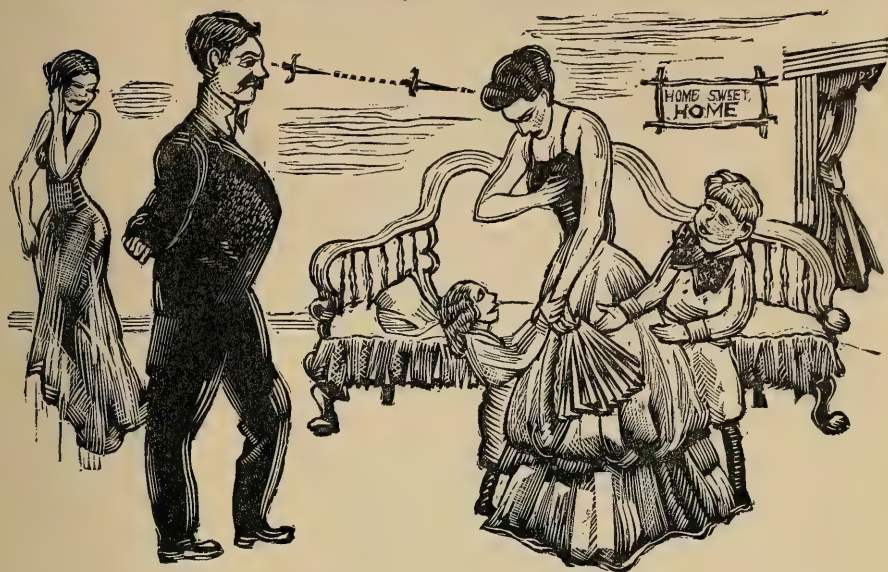
"Tonight of a village I'm dreaming
That is far from the city's noise,
Where homelights in windows are gleaming
For wandering girls and boys.
They blaspheme who call *this* a village
Where nothing is quite what it seems.
Oh I wish I were back, with my old sweetheart, Jack
In *my* village—the one of my dreams.'"





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER XV

IF A LOOK COULD KILL



I

SOCIETY was dancing
At the home of a millionaire.
A dreamy waltz was playing;
Romance was in the air.
But midst this scene of splendor
All hearts were not so light,
For one sweet wife's was breaking
For a husband lost that night.
He had been seen embracing
In a conservatory dim
A vampire bold and brazen
Who had made a fool of him.
And when his wife had faced him
And he his guilt did own
He looked at her so hatefully,
She then did softly moan:

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"If a look could kill
I would have died just then.
And though I love you still
I knew I'd lost you when
You gave that look of hate
Which pierced my sad heart through.
Go—leave me to my fate
This life has ruined you."

II

The husband stood there, silent,
His brain now cleared of wine
And then he spoke up gently,
"Yes, Pearl, the fault was mine,
This fast life *does* spell ruin,
We'll leave it, you and me,
And start for the open spaces
Where a man a man can be."
His wife forgave him freely
For the sake of the 'kiddies' two,
And as he stopped to kiss them
He said, "Dear wife, 'twas you
Who brought me to my senses,
—Forget that look I gave—
Those words that you did utter
I'll remember to my grave:

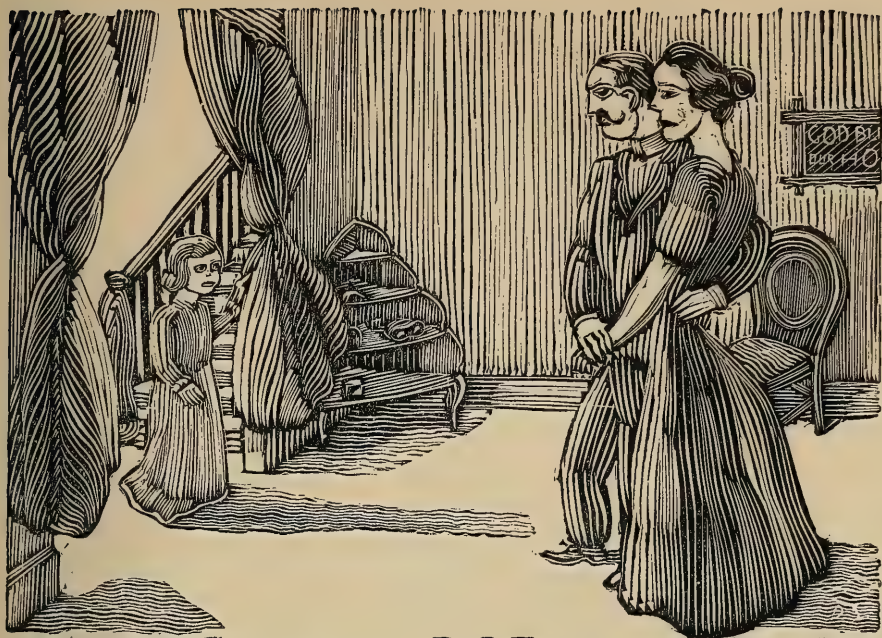
REFRAIN

"If a look could kill
I would have died just then.
And though I love you still
I knew I'd lost you when
You gave that look of hate
Which pierced my sad heart through.
Go—leave me to my fate
This life has ruined you.'"





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER XVI



I DESS HEARD DOD ON THE WADIO

I

A HUSBAND and wife had quarreled
 —As they'd often done of late—
 And had just about determined
 That 'twas best to separate.
 Said the husband, "T'would be tragic
 To go on this way through life."
 "For once I'm not disputing
 Your ideas," replied the wife.
 Here they stopped on hearing footsteps
 Coming softly down the stair,
 And before them in the doorway
 Their little girl stood there.
 Her nurse she had eluded
 And to them—to tell—she'd fled
 Just another childish secret
 With these words which now she said:

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

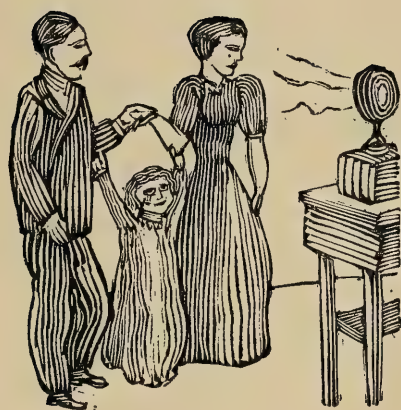
"I dess heard Dod on the wadio
When I was saying my pwayers.
He's talking 'bout Daddies and Muvvers
So—quick—come wiv me right upstairs.
He says if they have a kiddie,
As little, I 'magine as me,
They never should part, 'cause 'twould bweak Baby's
heart
And that—Oh so wicked would be."

II

Her plea so sweet and earnest
Her parents now obeyed,
Although they both were wondering
What meant the tiny maid.
But once before the radio,
It all became quite clear;
A great minister was preaching—
How his words *their* souls did sear.
The child stood in between them
And together joined their hands
As the sermon finally ended.
Said the father, "She understands
We've been just hateful children
Now our faults she's made us see."
Sobbed the wife, "It proved a blessing
When she said to you and me:

REFRAIN

"I dess heard Dod on the wadio
When I was saying my pwayers.
He's talking 'bout Daddies and Muvvers
So—quick—come wiv me right upstairs.
He says if they have a kiddie,
As little, I 'magine as me,
They never should part, 'cause 'twould bweak Baby's
heart
And that—Oh so wicked would be."





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER XVII

PM GOING TO START IN WRITING LETTERS



OR THE REPENTANT SHOW GIRL

I

'T WAS New Year's Eve. A party
Was madly under way
In honor of some show girls.
The hosts were club men gay.
There was rich food, wine and music.
There was dancing, laughter, song,
But near midnight it grew quiet;
Then an old boy asked, "What's wrong?
Are you sweeties making pledges
For the New Year? That's no fun.
Cheer up! More wine! This party
Has only just begun."
Here one girl dropped her wine glass
And when her chum did cry
"For Heaven's sakes, what is it, Dot?"
She bravely did reply:

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"I am going to start in writing letters
On New Year's to Mother and Dad.
This life, I won't let cause me to forget
The best friends that I ever had.
A new leaf, I vow, I'll turn over.
May God keep it clean, the New Year,
As the letters I write back home every night.
To my loved ones so precious and dear."

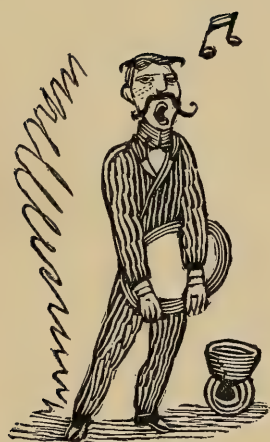
II

Now as she finished speaking
The bells, New Year proclaimed.
But there were no glad greetings.
Her words, them all had shamed.
Just silence, which was broken
By a youth who'd long admired
The girl. "Come Dot, we're leaving;
You're all keyed up and tired."
They left. Once in his auto,
He said, "We'll quit this life.
A ranch out west I've purchased.
Let's go there—man and wife."
When she whispered "I am willing."
He answered, "I was right.
I knew you were pure gold dear
When you did say tonight:

REFRAIN

"I am going to start in writing letters
On New Year's to Mother and Dad.
This life, I won't let cause me to forget
The best friends that I ever had.
A new leaf, I vow, I'll turn over.
May God keep it clean, the New Year,
As the letters I write back home every night.
To my loved ones so precious and dear."





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER XVIII

I'D FORGIVE YOU IF YOU WERE IN EARNEST



I

AT a brilliant social gathering
In a Palm Beach mansion, grand,
A youth and maid were dancing.

Now at length he pressed her hand
And leaning down, he whispered
Into the fair one's ear:

"Let's seek the sunken garden,
You'll agree, it's stifling here."

No sooner in the garden

Than a mad embrace he tried.

The girl repulsed him bravely

Then, as if ashamed, he cried:

"Don't blame me, it was the tropics
That made me lose my head.

Forgive me—." Here she stopped him
And scornfully she said:

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"I'd forgive you if you were in earnest
But I can't quite believe in you when
Your conduct you blame on the tropics.
I've been told *that* again and again.
Oh, I'm tired of this place, and tomorrow
I leave for my home in the West.
I'd hoped you, somehow, were different, but now
I find that you're just like the rest."

II

On a train bound west next morning
Sat the maid—so sad and blue
For the man she loved—behind her
She was leaving—that she knew.
Now glancing up, when someone
Said: "Thank God, I've found you, dear."
She saw the youth before her
And asked: "Why are you here?
Have the tropics overcome you?"
He replied: "That's cruel. No!
I'm here for just one reason,
I love and want you so."
The girl, relenting, murmured:
"Why it's ending like a play.
Oh, you must have known I cared, dear,
When to you I did say:

REFRAIN

"I'd forgive you if you were in earnest
But I can't quite believe in you when
Your conduct you blame on the tropics.
I've been told *that* again and again.
Oh, I'm tired of this place, and tomorrow
I leave for my home in the West.
I'd hoped you, somehow, were different, but now
I find that you're just like the rest.' "





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER XIX

WHY CAN'T I PLAY IN THE ASH HEAP?



I

A RICH little lad from his nurse once did stray
And out in the back yard he ran,
And there on the ash heap he sat down to play—
His toy was an old garbage can.
A call from his mother, severe and so stern,
“Come, Clifford, you’re covered with dirt.”
Made the child drop his plaything, and then slowly
turn
And sob out in accents so hurt:

CHORUS

“Why can’t I play in the ash heap,
Like kiddies I see every day?
Why do you warn me always to keep
From the old garbage can away?”

SOB BALLADS

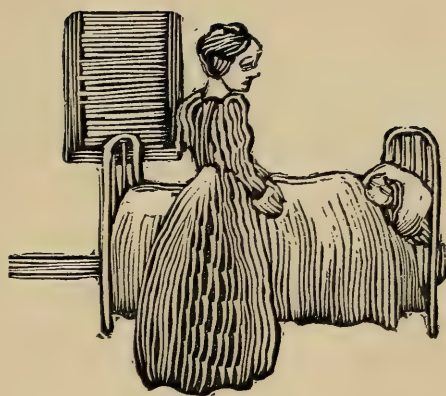
Is it because we're so swell, you forbid
All my games but the sissy kind?
I wish God had made me a tough little kid,
With no dad or mother to mind."

II

In a cool darkened room lies the same little lad,
The doctors have said he must die;
And the reason they give to the parents so sad,
Is one that they cannot deny.
"God's great out-of-doors which you would not allow
Would have kept him from sickness quite free."
Then the mother thinks back—but too late is it now—
To the day when her child made this plea:

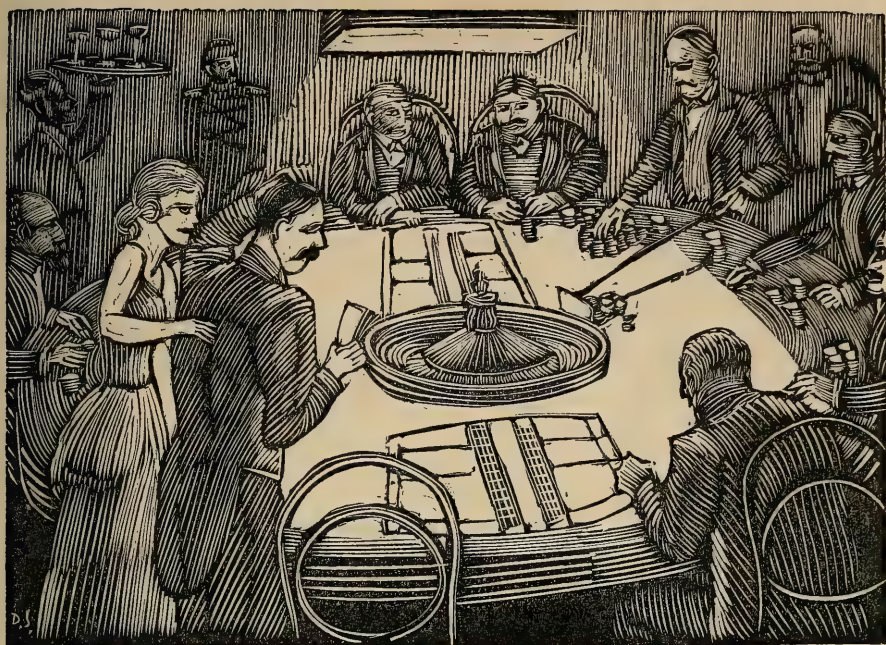
CHORUS

"Why can't I play in the ash heap,
Like kiddies I see every day?
Why do you warn me always to keep
From the old garbage can away?
Is it because we're so swell, you forbid
All my games but the sissy kind?
I wish God had made me a tough little kid,
With no dad or mother to mind."





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER XX



OUR GLADYS AT HOME IS JUST SEVEN

I

IN a gilded, gambling salon
 At a Spa, well known and gay
 A man stood at a table
 Where roulette was the play.
 His fair wife stood beside him—
 Their faces both were tense,
 For luck was dead against him.
 His losses were immense.
 When down to his last thousand,
 He turned as if he sought,
 From his wife, an inspiration
 What next to play, he ought.
 She smiled and quickly sensing
 What he wanted, scratched a note.
 With trembling hands he took it
 And read these words she wrote:

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"Our Gladys, at home, is *just* seven—
Why don't you *that* number, try?
She always has brought us good fortune
And will now, dear—Never say die!
I can't believe if you gamble
With her in your thoughts, it's a sin.
So I'll pray hard to Heaven—while you play for seven.
And I'm sure you can't help but win."

II

"A hundred on the seven,"
Said the man as players stared.
"You win," snapped out the croupier,
As the pill dropped.—How he glared.
And so oft the seven repeated,
That ere the night was o'er,
The man recouped his losses
And won many thousands more.
As he cashed in his huge winnings,
He whispered to his wife,
"I'm finished now with gambling,
I've had enough for life.
Thank God for little Gladys
And the number of her years."
Said his wife, "Won't she just love it
When those words I wrote she hears?"

REFRAIN

"Our Gladys, at home, is *just* seven—
Why don't you *that* number, try?
She always has brought us good fortune
And will now, dear—Never say die!
I can't believe if you gamble
With her in your thoughts, it's a sin.
So I'll pray hard to Heaven—while you play for seven.
And I'm sure you can't help but win."





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER XXI

I'M NOT WEEPING BECAUSE HE IS RUINED



I

IN an elegant city apartment
Sat a beautiful maiden in tears.
For the news that her sweetheart was ruined
In Wall Street, had just reached her ears.
Her Auntie, a gray-haired old lady,
With whom she had lived since a child,
Now in vain tried to quiet her darling
With words that were soothing and mild;
"Don't cry and take on so," she murmured,
"Though I know all looks dark—never mind.
If your lover has lost all his riches,
Soon another you're certain to find."
At this the maid curbed her emotion
And then, raising her fair, queenly head,
She indignantly gazed at her Auntie
As firmly but gently she said:

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"I'm not weeping because he is ruined.
No—his lost wealth I'm not thinking of.
It's just—I'm so worried, that he hasn't hurried
To me to find comforting love.
Why, my jewels, my sables, and autos
Are all his for the asking to sell.
They *might* help him some. Oh, I wish he would
come,
So my feelings to him I could tell."

II

Just then in the room walked her sweetheart,
And so pallid and worn was his face
That the maiden sobbed out, "My poor Daddy,"
As she gave him a tender embrace.
Her sympathy did much to bring him
A new courage, and bravely he spoke,
"Well, Wall Street where I cleaned up a fortune
Has turned on me, dear, and I'm broke.
Upstate I've the farm and old homestead,
But I don't even hope you'd much care
To give up all this and go with me
As my wife and start over, up there."
When she murmured, "Of course I'll go with you.
Yes—I love you and I'm ready today,"
He replied, "Now I'm sure, dear, you meant all
I heard—as I entered—you say:

REFRAIN

"I'm not weeping because he is ruined.
No—his lost wealth I'm not thinking of.
It's just—I'm so worried that he hasn't hurried
To me to find comforting love.
Why, my jewels, my sables, and autos
Are all his for the asking to sell.
They *might* help him some. Oh, I wish he would
come,
So my feelings to him I could tell.'"





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER XXII

OLD-FASHIONED DANCES FOR AN OLD-FASHIONED GIRL



I

A YOUTH and maid were dancing
At a night club swell and gay.
Their steps of course were fancy
And suggestive in a way.
The youth, his cheeks now flaming,
Whispered in the fair one's ear,
"A kiss I'm all for claiming,
I never felt so queer."
The girl, at this mad statement,
Broke from the lad's embrace.
He thought that she was fainting,
So ashen was her face.
When asked if she felt badly,
Once they were safe outside,
She shook her head and sadly
These words to him replied:

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"Give me the old-fashioned dances
That mother tells me were so pure;
The Two-step, the Polka, the Lancers,
Ah, they were not vulgar, I'm sure.
I hate both the Charleston and Foxtrot;
They set men so in a whirl.
Please don't think me rude or judge me a prude,
For I'm just an old-fashioned girl."

II

The youth, as they sped homeward,
Owned up he'd played the cad
And for forgiveness pleaded.
He said, "I'm not all bad.
I thought you just another
Who loved to dance the town.
Instead you're like my mother."
He sobbed and then broke down.
The maid forgave his madness,
For she really loved the youth,
And as she glanced up fondly,
He realized the truth.
And when he'd asked the question
And she'd promised him to wed,
He murmured, "Dear, I loved you,
From the moment that you said:

REFRAIN

"Give me the old-fashioned dances
That mother tells me were so pure;
The Two-Step, the Polka, the Lancers,
Ah, they were not vulgar, I'm sure.
I hate both the Charleston and Foxtrot;
They set men so in a whirl.
Please don't think me rude or judge me a prude,
For I'm just an old-fashioned girl.'"





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER XXIII

I ADMIT THAT I'M ONLY A CHAUFFEUR



I

A RICH man's cherished daughter
Had madly fall'n in love
With the handsome family chauffeur.
"What *are* you thinking of?"
Her smart companions asked her;
Added one—a suitor scorned—
"Poor girl. No mother's guidance.
Her father should be warned."
When told, the irate father
To his study called the pair,
And there the truth demanded
About their 'foolish kid' affair.
Said the girl "Dad, don't be silly."
Then frankly her love confessed.
While her sweetheart spoke up boldly
And her parent thus addressed:

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"I admit that I'm only a chauffeur
But my love for your daughter's sincere.
The ground that she walks on I worship.
Of my intentions you need have no fear.
I'm poor, Sir, but you must remember
That at my age *your* fortunes were low.
Just a start do I need and like you I'll succeed,
With your girl for my wife—that I know."

II

"What do *you* know?" asked the father
"Of my young days—come—the truth?"
"Only what my grand dad told me."
Then replied the fearless youth.
"Your name with pride he'd mention
As a great man, whose real start
Toward wealth, himself had given,
When you drove his grocery cart."
The rich man smiled and softened,
"What a small world this—my lad."
Said he, "I owe you something
To repay your good grand dad.
I'll set you up in business
And if you two would wed.
I give in. My son your spirit
Won me over when you said:

REFRAIN

"I admit that I'm only a chauffeur
But my love for your daughter's sincere.
The ground that she walks on I worship.
Of my intentions you need have no fear.
I'm poor, Sir, but you must remember
That at my age *your* fortunes were low.
Just a start do I need and like you I'll succeed,
With your girl for my wife—that I know.' "





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER XXIV



YOUR LETTER TODAY MADE ME CRY

I

IN a salon, richly furnished,
 A woman sat in tears.
 With a letter she was reading,
 Which had called back bygone years.
 She was now a famous painter
 But she'd bartered for career,
 The love of him who'd written
 And who still held her so dear.
 He wrote, "Though you dismissed me,
 To my first love I've been true.
 Today I've fame and fortune
 But they're nothing without you."
 Now at her desk she answered
 With a note—its meaning plain—
 She prayed, "Oh may this message
 Bring him to me again.

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"Your letter today made me cry
But the tears soothed my aching heart.
For years I've been wondering why
I scorned, dear, your love for my art.
Though the world acclaims me of its great,
True happiness I've never known
Since that fatal day, when I sent you away.
So come back and claim me your own."

II

Her letter reached the lover
And homeward swift he sped.
He found his sweetheart waiting
And soon the twain were wed.
Came then her greatest painting
"Love or Art?" 'twas called. A maid
Embracing her Prince Charming
Was lifelike there portrayed.
While near by mourned the Muses,
Whose gifts she'd cast aside.
"May this picture," said the artist,
"A thousand maidens guide."
Then she murmured to her husband,
"Your love for me so true
Brought me this inspiration
That night when I wrote you."

REFRAIN

"Your letter today made me cry
But the tears soothed my aching heart.
For years I've been wondering why
I scorned, dear, your love for my art.
Though the world acclaims me of its great,
True happiness I've never known
Since that fatal day, when I sent you away.
So come back and claim me your own."





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER XXV



I

A SPEAKEASY, gay, had been raided.
 Brave policemen had done the job well.
 They had even smashed up the apartment
 Where the owner and family did dwell.
 The owner of course was arrested
 And roughly was rushed off to jail.
 His wife and his friends followed after
 Intent upon getting his bail—
 Forgetting the sweet little daughter
 Who, frightened, had fled from the noise.
 Upon their return they were frantic
 Till they found her asleep 'mongst her toys.
 She awakened in terror. Her mother
 Soothed her gently and calmed all her fears.
 And when coaxed to tell what had happened
 This story she sobbed through her tears:

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

“Naughty mens comed into my playroom
They breaked up my doll house and things
My picture-books too are all teared up
And they stepped on my dolly that sings.
When I cried to them please not to do it,
They said, ‘She’s jus’ tryin’ to hide
Some booze.’ An’ so hard they pushed me
I falled down and hurted my side.”

II

Before a wise Judge a week later
The case of the owner was tried.
A bright lawyer was there to defend it,
The wee daughter sat right by his side.
When the People’s Attorney had finished,
The child took the stand—unafraid.
Once again she told what she’d suffered
On the terrible night of the raid.
The Judge heard her through, then severely
Spoke up: “If enforcing *this* law
Means assault on children and smashing
Their playthings—well, that’s the last straw.
The action’s dismissed and I’ll welcome
The wrath of the Drys on my head
For no Judge, if a *man*, could hold different
Upon hearing this babe when she said:

REFRAIN

“Naughty mens comed into my playroom
They breaked up my doll house and things.
My picture-books too are all teared up
And they stepped on my dolly that sings.
When I cried to them please not to do it,
They said, ‘She’s jus’ tryin’ to hide
Some booze.’ An’ so hard they pushed me
I falled down and hurted my side.”





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER XXVI

THE RING TO YOU I AM RETURNING.



I

A YOUTH, good night,—was saying
To the maid whose heart he'd won;
He bent and tried to kiss her
But she, as if to shun
The kiss, shrank back and murmured,
"I'm tired tonight. Don't—please."
He laughed, "Oh you don't mean that
You're saying it to tease."
But the next day came a package
From the maiden to the youth.
And when it he had opened
He learned the bitter truth.
The engagement ring, his letters
Were in it, and a note.
His dream of love seemed over
When he scanned these words she wrote:

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"The ring to you I am returning,
It may be I never shall wed.
Don't think me untrue—I still care for you,
But I can't go on with it, Fred.
You're manly and fine, but your business
Is all you e'er talk of to me.
You haven't romance, and there isn't a chance
Without it—my husband to be."

II

The youth was low in spirit.
Till some one told him of
A book which had helped many,
Called "The Art of Making Love."
Now with its precepts mastered,
Upon the girl he called,
His manner was so courtly
He held her there enthralled.
He talked to her of music,
Of romance, books and art.
Said she, "Fred, you're so different
You're winning back my heart.
What has changed you?" "That's my secret"
He replied, "Though I'd *still* be
Just a man and not a lover
If you hadn't written me:

REFRAIN

"The ring to you I am returning,
It may be I never shall wed.
Don't think me untrue—I still care for you,
But I can't go on with it, Fred.
You're manly and fine, but your business
Is all you e'er talk of to me.
You haven't romance, and there isn't a chance
Without it—my husband to be."





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER XXVII



**MY KISSES
ARE ALL FOR MY HUSBAND.**

I

A GROUP of chatty flappers
 Sat in a tea-room smart.
 They were talking of their boy friends
 And petting as an Art.
 But one of them was silent.
 She seemed so ill at ease,
 'Twas evident the subject
 Did not her fancy please.
 Her silence now was noticed
 By the loudest talking girl,
 Who, turning to her, questioned,
 "Well, what's *your* trouble, Pearl?
 You sit there like a 'stupid'
 Without opening your head."
 The girl flushed up; then bravely
 To her companions said:

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"Perhaps I'm old-fashioned and fussy,
Perhaps I'm straitlaced and slow,
But I don't hold my lips so cheaply
As you do, and that much I know.
For my kisses are all for my husband.
I'm going to be married in May,
And I choose to be true. If that annoys you,
Our friendship is ended today."

II

Her outburst brought forth laughter.
"Why, Pearl, you're quite insane,"
Said one. Then spoke another:
"Your line gives me a pain."
The maid now rose up weeping
And was just about to leave,
When a handsome stranger stopped her—
He wore mourning on his sleeve.
He said, "Your little preachment,
My dear, I overheard.
I know my wife in Heaven
Would have loved your every word.
The world needs more girls like you,
Though your views your friends condemn
They'll regret they didn't heed you,
When you did say to them:

REFRAIN

"Perhaps I'm old fashioned and fussy,
Perhaps I'm straitlaced and slow,
But I don't hold my lips so cheaply
As you do, and that much I know.
For my kisses are all for my husband.
I'm going to be married in May,
And I choose to be true. If that annoys you,
Our friendship is ended today.'"





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER XXVIII

TELL MOTHER I DIED FOR MY COUNTRY



I

IN a place known as "The Frenchman's"
—A restaurant ill-famed—

Some young men sat at dinner.

Said one: "This joint, it's claimed,
Sells liquor. What's your order?"

They agreed upon straight rye.

When served, the youth who'd spoken

Was first his drink to try.

As the others raised their glasses

He gasped, "Oh, give me air,
Don't drink. That liquor's poison."

Then sank from off his chair.

His chums tried to arouse him,

He smiled and shook his head.

"It's no use, boys, I'm going."

He stopped, then feebly said:

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"Tell mother I died for my country
That its laws might be obeyed.
Tell her I was doing my duty
And my part in the game I played.
If our Government chooses harsh methods
To bring prohibition about,
I will not complain, for 'twas always my aim
To help stamp the liquor curse out."

II

His friends thought he was raving,
But just before he died,
Pinned well back on his waistcoat
An "Agent's" badge they spied.
"He died," one said, "a hero,
And Washington must know.
They surely will reward him;
He loved his country so."
When Washington was written,
They promptly did respond
With a mother's Honor Ribbon
For her he held so fond.
By a worthy Act of Congress
A monument was reared
In memory of the martyr
And thereon these words appeared:

REFRAIN

"Tell mother I died for my country
That its laws might be obeyed.
Tell her I was doing my duty
And my part in the game I played.
If our Government chooses harsh methods
To bring prohibition about,
I will not complain, for 'twas always my aim
To help stamp the liquor curse out."





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER XXIX

I'M SO TIRED OF IT ALL



I

THE daughter of a millionaire,
Her age is just sixteen,
A student in a school select
In looks a dainty queen.
Her parents cater to her whims,
Her home's a place refined,
And yet she's an unhappy child
Who never knows her mind.
One day from school she comes not home.
Her mother grows alarmed.
Her father's face is set and blanched
For fear she might be harmed.
In frantic haste they search her room.
—Ah, how their hearts must bleed—
They find a note. With trembling hands
They open it and read:

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"Dear father and mother, you're so good to me,
But I'm just tired of it all,
And, oh, for a little I want to be free,
So I've answered the gypsy call.
I'm longing to hear the sweet song of birds,
Pick flowers and smell new mown hay.
Please calm all your fears and don't worry, dears.
It just had to happen this way."

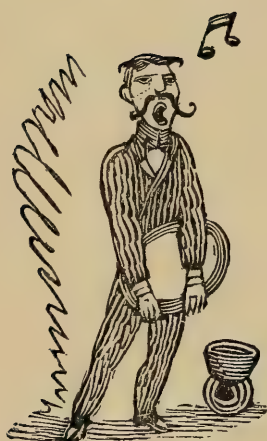
II

Two weeks have passed, the wand'ring one
Returns, no more to roam.
The road no longer holds its lure;
Ah, how she loves her home.
She tells her parents of her trials,
Of nights in terror spent,
Of horrid men who followed her
About where'er she went.
Of being hungry, tired and faint;
Of thunder, lightning, rain.
Of troubled dreams that she'd ne'er see
Her home and folks again.
"I'm sorry, dears," she sobs aloud.
They wipe her tears away.
"I'd like so much to make amends,
And now I want to say:

REFRAIN

"Dear father and mother, you were TOO good to me
And to think that I tired of it all.
Never again do I want to be free,
And I'm deaf to the gypsy call.
My little canary sings sweetly enough,
My bed I prefer to loose hay.
So calm all your fears and remember, old dears,
I'm back in the old home to stay."





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER XXX

I'M MAKING NO PLANS FOR MY FUTURE



I

A T a prominent college for women,
One day on the old campus "green,"
Sat a group of high "honor" Seniors
Discussing "Career" with the Dean.
It was nearing the time for Commencement
And the talk was in serious vein,
As each girl told her secret ambition
And the goal she hoped to attain.
Two or three were to go in for business
While some for the Arts did declare.
There were journalists, brokers and teachers
In that circle of students so fair.
Only one of their number was silent,
A modest, old-fashioned maid—she,
Who, when asked by the Dean of *her* "calling,"
Simply answered "My dears, as for me

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"I'm making no plans for my future
So far as concerns a career.
I hope you won't think my years wasted
That I've spent so pleasantly here.
I just feel the *one* place for a woman
Is the home; her position—a wife.
Beyond that, I know, I ne'er want to go
To bring me contentment in life."

II

Her words were by some received coldly
While others, in pity, just smiled.
Said her room-mate, who tried to be loyal,
"Don't scold her, she's only a child—"
Here the gentle old Dean interrupted;
As she spoke, tears were seen in her eyes;
"Don't call *her* a child, dear young lady,
All her claims I consider most wise.
For it's true the *real* aim of a woman
—Which, of course, some of you will deny—
Is to become both a wife and a mother.
It was mine—once—but I let it die.
Your ambitions are fine—I commend them
And I beg you with them go ahead;
But in time heed the words of your classmate,
Who echoed my thoughts when she said:

REFRAIN

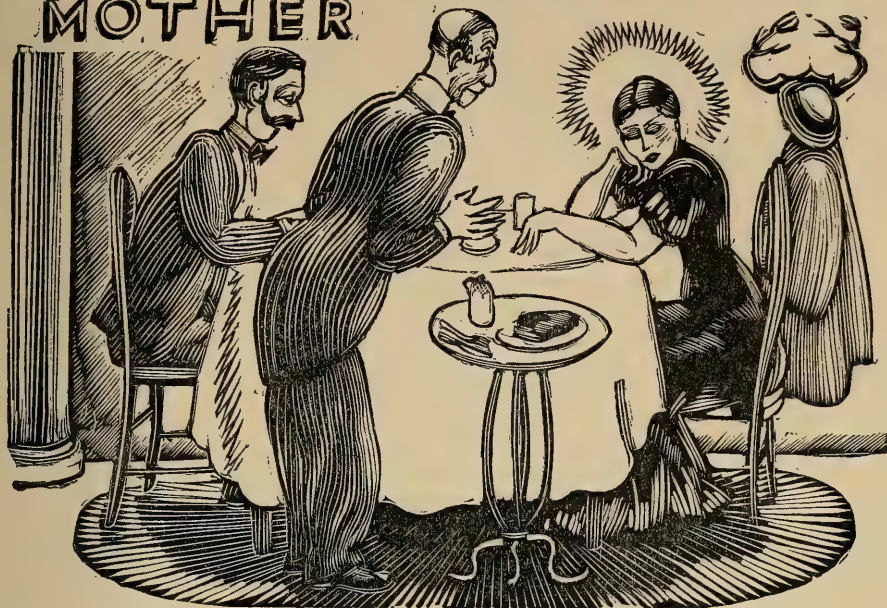
"I'm making no plans for my future
So far as concerns a career.
I hope you won't think my years wasted
That I've spent so pleasantly here.
I just feel the *one* place for a woman
Is the home; her position—a wife.
Beyond that, I know, I ne'er want to go
To bring me contentment in life.'"





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER XXXI

PLEASE TAKE ME HOME TO MY MOTHER



I

A MAIDEN fair was dining
 In a fashionable café
 With a young man she was fond of
 In just a friendly way;
 And when a genteel waiter
 Asked her, of food, her choice,
 She answered, "Filet Mignon,"
 In a timid sort of voice.
 Her order served, the maiden
 Glanced at the fancy dish
 And said, "*That* Filet Mignon?
 Why, Filet Mignon's fish."
 The youth gazed at her sadly,
 The waiter turned away,
 While she, her error sensing,
 Then sobbingly did say:

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

"Oh, please take me home to my mother,
What that waiter *must* think of me!
I just feel some way or other
I'm not meant for society.
I thought I was swell when I ordered,
But now—Oh, I'm so mortified,
So take me home please, I can't be at ease,
Though God only knows that I've tried."

II

When the youth heard her entreaty
He realized her need,
And on the morrow sent her
A WONDER BOOK to read.
The time is now weeks later,
The place that same café;
The youth and maid are dining,
Her manner's light and gay;
And when the waiter asked her,
"Madame, what shall I bring?"
She answered quite indifferently,
"Oh, Chicken à la King."
And when later to her escort
She said, "I've you to thank."
He answered, "Dear, I've loved you since
Those words you spoke so frank."

REFRAIN

"Oh, please take me home to my mother,
What that waiter *must* think of me!
I just feel some way or other
I'm not meant for society.
I thought I was swell when I ordered,
But now—Oh, I'm so mortified,
So take me home please, I can't be at ease,
Though God only knows that I've tried.' "





SOB BALLAD
NUMBER XXXII



HE WAS GOOD TO HIS WIFE & HIS KIDDIES

I

A GUNMAN lay wounded and dying
 In a hospital chamber drear.
 Around him, his family was gathered
 With his pals—their grief was sincere.
 To his bedside now came some detectives
 Who urged him the killer to name;
 “He shot you from ambush,” they argued
 “If you tell us, we’ll take the blame.”
 The gunman his eyes slowly opened—
 His pain, all could see, was intense—
 He shook his head weakly and murmured
 “You bulls oughta have better sense.”
 And then to his loved ones he whispered,
 “If I pass, I want you to see
 That my funeral’s grand and remember
 To have just these things said of me:

SOB BALLADS

REFRAIN

“He was good to his wife and his kiddies,
With his pals he always was square,
And those who was out for to get him
He fought up-and-up and shot fair.
His faults, though they may have been many,
Not an enemy even could claim
That he was a heel or let out a squeal.
He died as he lived which was game.

II

The doctors reported next morning
A chance that the gunman might live,
If some one his blood for transfusion
Would unto the wounded man give.
Late that day there came to the doctors,
An underworld character bad,
Who said, “I’m your man for this ‘party’
For ’twas me who shot up this lad.
I’m safe here at least, so get busy.”
They obeyed and all turned out right.
Soon, as friends, the patients were mending,
Forgotten their murderous fight.
The gunman now asked his assailant
“Why, for me, did you risk your life?”
“It got to me hard,” was the answer,
“When you said to your pals and your wife:

REFRAIN

“He was good to his wife and his kiddies,
With his pals he always was square,
And those who was out for to get him
He fought up-and-up and shot fair.
His faults, though they may have been many,
Not an enemy even could claim
That he was a heel or let out a squeal.
He died as he lived which was game.’”





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